

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important issue today. My name is Joan Liska and I live at 467R Kelsey St, Middletown, CT. I am a senior citizen and a grandmother of 4 and I am here today to speak AGAINST the proposed changes to:

AN ACT CONCERNING FIREARM SAFETY.

Specifically, the proposed revisions to the general statutes relating to the following sections and subsections:

Section 1.	Section 29-37i
Sec. 2	Section 52-571g
Sec. 3	Section 53a-217a
Sec. 4	Subsection (d) of section 29-38c

In opening I wish to acknowledge that bad things can happen with the **criminal or negligent** handling of firearms (especially when a child or a mentally unstable person gains access to a firearm and uses it in a harmful manner).

When we as a society wish to create a legal means to hold such person accountable (*after the harmful act has occurred*), we look to our legislators to correct the problem in a thoughtful and deliberative manner. The proposed changes before you today would inhibit my 2nd Amendment rights, rights granted to all Americans by our Founding Fathers, and such changes would deny me my right to defend myself and my family using a legal firearm.

The statutes I have cited were originally written with the intent to keep guns out of the hands of minors. The proposal on the table now is designed to keep guns out of the hands of **EVERYONE EXCEPT the criminal who has no regard for the law.**

To focus your attention to the proposed revision of **Section 29-37i** which concerns me and should concern you, I will cite the proposed wording to include only one editorial comment that I will insert:

No person shall store or keep any firearm [Ed. Note: loaded or unloaded] on any premises under such person's control if such person knows or reasonably should know that another person is likely to gain access to the firearm, unless such person storing or keeping the firearm keeps the firearm in a securely locked box or other container or in a location which a reasonable person would believe to be secure, or carries the firearm on his or her person or within such close proximity thereto that such person can readily retrieve and use the firearm as if such person carried the firearm on his or her person.

At this point, it bears repeating that in this country the citizens have the right to bear arms. We, the citizens, have the right to protect ourselves, our family and our property, if necessary with the use of a firearm.

An unloaded firearm in a locked box is useless for defense when a criminal is invading your home, threatening you or your family. With this proposed law revision, a law abiding citizen would have to have sufficient time to get to the locked box to retrieve the gun, remove any trigger lock, load it and then confront the invading criminal. I've heard this Section of the law referred to as the "Criminal Protection Act". This is a tongue in cheek joke, but this law change is no joke. Are our laws supposed to be protecting criminals? Criminals would have the advantage of knowing the law abiding citizen would have zero chance to get to their firearm in time to stop them. In today's increasingly violent world, the disarming of responsible, law abiding citizens only makes it easier for criminals and terrorists.

I find material, conceptual flaws in the logic of the proposed changes, but particularly in changes to **Section 29-37i**. For example, two people in the same family could not own or possess any firearm without breaking this law even if the firearm is unloaded and locked up. Reason: it is reasonable to know that more than one family member could and even ought to gain access to that firearm if, for instance, a husband and wife both had the key to that lockbox and they both use that firearm (perhaps as hunters or target shooters or defenders of the home). If you are cleaning the gun, don't leave the room to answer a phone or go to the bathroom without taking that empty gun with you as someone else in the household could get access to it, even if the bullets are separately locked away. The simple application of the wording as proposed could be used way beyond the intent of the law to make an innocent person guilty.

The proposed wording is further flawed in that "any premises" is not defined. Thus, a store owner who keeps a loaded firearm under the counter beside the cash register would be breaking the law as other employees (i.e. cashiers) would be able to reasonably gain access to that firearm to perhaps defend against a robbery. And if the employee uses the gun to stop that robbery and kills someone, this law makes the gun owner strictly liable and criminally negligent, a Class D felony. Do we want to hand over the safety and security of our communities to the criminals? Is that our ultimate goal?

In many government buildings when you enter the building, if I had a permit to carry, I would have had to turn that gun over to another person (the guard) during my stay here in this building. I would be breaking this proposed law by not keeping that gun away from that guard and within my proximate reach.

I am here today to stand up for my Constitutional right to bear arms. Other laws already on the books hold firearm users accountable to use firearms responsibly. I would encourage you to vote NO on the changes to this law as proposed.

It is understandable that every effort would be extended to avoid another Sandy Hook. All of our hearts went out to the victims, the families and the first responders of that terrible tragedy. Those murders would not have occurred had Mrs. Lanza recognized the terrible decision she made to grant her mentally disturbed son access to firearms. Pass a revision to the law that would hold family members accountable if they do allow a mentally disturbed person such access should the firearm then be used to harm someone. That is a reasonable position to take.